

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SR-02 ORM-01 AID-05 FDRE-00

OPR-02 A-01 IO-10 SCA-01 SCS-03 /077 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5464

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5146

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR VS

SUBJECT: PRIORITY FOR US COMMERCIAL AIRLIFT

REF: (A) STATE 086893; (B) LEHMANN/ORTMAN TELECON

1. THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO PANAM IS AS FOLLOWS:

THERE ARE TWO REGULARLY SCHEDULED PANAM FLIGHTS LEAVING SAIGON A WEEK. IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS THE FLIGHTS HAVE USUALLY BEEN FULLY OR ALMOST FULLY BOOKED. HOWEVER, THE PATTERN ON RECENT FLIGHTS HAS BEEN THAT THERE HAS BEEN A LARGE NUMBER OF "NO SHOWS" AT DEPARTURE TIME. LOCAL PANAM MANAGEMENT HAS ANALYZED THE SITUATION AND TELLS US THAT MOST OF THE "NO SHOWS" ARE PERSONS, MANY OF THEM VIETNAMESE, WHO HAVE EITHER BOUGHT TICKETS HERE OR FOR WHOM TICKETS HAVE BEEN PURCHASED ELSEWHERE AND WHO HAVE MADE RESERVATIONS BUT SUBSEQUENTLY FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER HAVE NOT CHECKED IN AT DEPARTURE TIME. WE AND PANAM SPECULATE THAT IN SOME CASES REASON IS LACK OF EXIT DOCUMENTATION OR IN OTHERS A DECISION TO DEFER DEPARTURE UNTIL A LATER DATE. AT THE SAME TIME WE UNDERSTAND PANAM HAS LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN FILLING THE REST OF THE FLIGHTS' CAPACITY WITH PASSENGERS IT PICKS UP IN MANILA AND GUAM.

2. WITH RESPECT TO USE OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT THE FOLLOWING ARE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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FACTS: IN ADDITION TO THE WELL PUBLICIZED ORPHAN LIFT, DAO HAS BEEN

USING THE BACKHAUL CAPACITY ON MAC FLIGHTS FROM CLARK TO TAKE OUT SUCH DOD AND DOD CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL WHO HAVE BECOME SURPLUS AND WHO ALONG WITH THEIR DEPENDENTS ARE DOCUMENTED FOR DEPARTURE. PASSENGERS ARE BEING CHARGED FOR THIS SERVICE. BECAUSE OF LACK OF PROPERLY DOCUMENTED PASSENGERS THIS CAPACITY HAS BEEN ONLY PARTIALLY USED. EVERY EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO BREAK THE DOCUMENTATION

BOTTLENECK. (THE ILLEGAL DEPARTURE OF SOME VIETNAMESE HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF SEPARATE MESSAGES AND AS THESE INDICATE THIS SITUATION IS UNDER CONTROL.)

3. FINALLY, WE WISH TO STRESS THAT IF WE ARE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN CITIZENS IN VIETNAM AND THEIR DEPENDENTS AND IF WE ARE TO DO SO AS WE MUST IN COMPLIANCE WITH VIETNAMEE LAW AND PROCEDURES AND WITH GVN COOPERATION, WE MUST HAVE COMPLETE FLEXIBILITY HERE AS TO THE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION THAT WE USE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL.

4. IF THERE IS ANY QUESTION RELATIVE TO SECRETARY'S FEELING ABOUT PRIORITY ON MOVEMENT, REGARDLESS OF METHOD, SUGGEST YOU CHECK WITH HIM.

MARTIN

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